

Message Text

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SUBJECT:EXCERPTS ON LATIN AMERICA FROM SECRETARY'S PRESS
CONFERENCE JANUARY 28

FOLLOWING EXCERPTS ON LATIN AMERICA FROM SECRETARY
KISSINGER'S PRESS CONFERENCE TODAY ARE BEING SENT FOR YOUR
INFORMATION AND USE:

Q: MR. SECRETARY, THIS QUESTION DEALS WITH THE DECISION OF
THE GOVERNMENT OF ARGENTINA TO POSTPONE, CANCEL OR OTHERWISE
DELAY THE PROPOSED MARCH MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS, AND
THEIR EXPLANATION THAT IT'S DUE TO THE RIGIDITY AND LACK OF
EQUITY ON THE PART OF THE U.S. TRADE BILL TOWARDS ECUADOR
AND VENEZUELA. I HAVE TWO QUESTIONS ON IT:

ONE IS, DO YOU THINK THIS IS A TOTALITY OF THE REASONS, OR
DO YOU THINK THAT CUBA FIGURES IN IT TO SOME EXTENT?

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AND THE SECOND QUESTION IS WHETHER IN VIEW OF THIS YOU FEEL THAT YOUR EFFORT TO BEGIN A NEW DIALOGUE HAS REALLY SUFFERED A SEVERE SETBACK?

SECRETARY KISSINGER : WITH RESPECT TO THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE MEETING IN ARGENTINA, I HAVE BEEN IN VERY CLOSE CONTACT WITH FOREIGN MINISTER VIGNES AND WITH OTHER OF MY COLLEAGUES IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE.

THEIR REASON SEEMS TO ME, AS STATED, THEIR OBJECTION TO THE PROVISION IN THE TRADE ACT WHICH INCLUDES ECUADOR AND VENEZUELA IN THE BAN ON GENERALIZED PREFERENCES. AND AS YOU KNOW, THAT IS BECAUSE THEY ARE MEMBERS OF OPEC.

NOW I STATED THE ADMINISTRATION POSITION ON THIS YESTERDAY. I TESTIFIED AGAINST THIS PROVISION WHEN THE TRADE ACT WAS BEING CONSIDERED.

THE PRESIDENT, IN SIGNING THE TRADE ACT, HAD THIS PROVISION IN MIND WHEN HE POINTED OUT THAT NOT ALL OF THE PROVISIONS WERE AGREEABLE TO THE ADMINISTRATION.

THE STATE DEPARTMENT ISSUED A STATEMENT SOMETIME AFTERWARDS, POINTING OUT THAT IT THOUGHT THE APPLICATION OF THIS PROVISION TO VENEZUELA AND ECUADOR WAS TOO RIGID.

NEVERTHELESS, WE BELIEVE THAT EVEN THOUGH WE DISAGREE WITH THE ACTION OF THE CONGRESS, WE BELIEVE THAT THE ACTION OF THOSE TWO GOVERNMENTS IN REFUSING TO COME TO THE BUENOS AIRES MEETING WAS UNJUSTIFIED. THEY KNEW VERY WELL THAT, ACCORDING TO OUR CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES, NO RELIEF COULD BE GIVEN UNTIL WE HAVE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY FOR FULL CONSULTATION WITH THE CONGRESS. AND THEY KNEW ALSO THAT WE WOULD CONSULT WITH THE CONGRESS AND THAT WE HAD REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE CONGRESS WOULD BE SYMPATHETIC TO OUR VIEWS.

NOW, MOREOVER, EVEN THOUGH WE OBJECTED TO SOME OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE TRADE BILL WITH RESPECT TO LATIN AMERICA, IT IS IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND THAT DOLS 750 MILLION IN UNCLASSIFIED

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LATIN AMERICAN EXPORTS ARE GOING TO ENTER THE UNITED STATES DUTY FREE UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE TRADE ACT AND THAT WHATEVER INEQUITIES EXISTED COULD HAVE BEEN WORKED OUT.

AND AS I POINTED OUT YESTERDAY, AS PART OF THE NEW DIALOGUE, THE UNITED STATES HAS DECLARED THAT IT WOULD NOT USE PRESSURE WITH RESPECT TO ITS NEIGHBORS IN THE WESTERN

HEMISPHERE -- BUT IT IS ALSO INAPPROPRIATE THAT OUR NEIGHBORS SHOULD ATTEMPT TO USE PRESSURE AGAINST THE UNITED STATES.

NOW WITH RESPECT TO YOUR SPECIFIC QUESTION: CUBA HAD ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS, BECAUSE WE HAD HAD FULL CONSULTATIONS ON HOW TO HANDLE THE ISSUE OF CUBA WITH OUR WESTERN HEMISPHERE NEIGHBORS, AND A SUBSTANTIAL CONSENSUS WAS EMERGING ON HOW THE ISSUE OF CUBA SANCTIONS

COULD BE HANDLED AT THE BUENOS AIRES MEETING, AND THERE HAD BEEN NO DISPUTE WITH RESPECT TO THAT.

DO I BELIEVE THAT THE NEW DIALOGUE IS IN JEOPARDY? AS WITH RESPECT TO THE SETBACK THAT WAS SUFFERED BY DETENTE, THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE BUENOS AIRES MEETING IS OBVIOUSLY NOT TO BE DESIRED.

ON THE OTHER HAND, ANY FOREIGN POLICY TO BE EFFECTIVE MUST REFLECT THE MUTUAL INTERESTS OF ALL PARTIES.

THE UNITED STATES BELIEVES VERY STRONGLY THAT A STRENGTHENING OF WESTERN HEMISPHERE TIES IS IN THE INTEREST OF ALL OF THE COUNTRIES IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE. WE HAVE BEEN PREPARED, AND REMAIN PREPARED, TO MAKE STRENGTHENED HEMISPHERE RELATIONS ONE OF THE CARDINAL ASPECTS OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY. AND WE ARE CONVINCED THAT THE MUTUALITY OF INTERESTS AND THE LONG TRADITION OF COOPERATION IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE WILL OVERCOME THIS TEMPORARY DIFFICULTY. AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING VERY CLOSELY WITH OUR FRIENDS IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE AND STRENGTHENING OUR RELATIONSHIP.

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Q: MR. SECRETARY, DO YOU PLAN TO TRAVEL TO LATIN AMERICA DURING THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY?

A: I PLAN -- I DON'T THINK I HAVE ANNOUNCED IT, AS SOME OF MY COLLEAGUES SEEM TO HAVE ANNOUNCED -- I DO PLAN TO TRAVEL TO LATIN AMERICA, CERTAINLY BEFORE THE OAS MEETING HERE IN APRIL. THE EXACT DATE I WOULD LIKE TO WORK OUT AFTER MY TRIP TO THE MIDDLE EAST HAS BEEN MORE FIRMLY SETTLED. BUT I WANT TO SAY NOW THAT I PLACE GREAT STRESS ON OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH LATIN AMERICA AND THAT I WILL GO AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY THAT I CAN DO JUSTICE TO THIS VISIT. KISSINGER

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